Lt. Governor Brown Announces Launch of Health Information Exchange

System to improve health care, reduce mistakes and help control costs, rapid statewide growth expected before end of the year

Lt. Governor's Office News Release

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (October 12, 2010) – Recognizing Maryland's role as a national leader for health information technology, Lt. Governor Anthony Brown today announced that the statewide health information exchange (HIE) is officially operational with the first connections between medical facilities in Montgomery County. The exchange is expected to grow rapidly throughout the state, having secured commitments of participation from 48 Maryland hospitals, including all 46 acute care hospitals.

"This is a major step in developing an electronic system that protects individual privacy while improving the quality of health care and controlling costs," said Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown. "Soon, every Marylander will be able to enjoy the benefits of having their critical medical information delivered with speed and accuracy to the point of care, avoiding medical mistakes especially in case of an emergency."

Governor Martin O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown set a goal for Maryland to become a national leader in health information technology by 2012 with the development of a safe and secure statewide HIE and promoting the adoption of electronic health records among providers. As a result, Maryland is already assisting physicians and other health care providers in their efforts to adopt electronic health records and obtain the support they will need to participate. HIE is the infrastructure that supports the private and secure flow of health information among physician practices, hospitals, clinics, labs, radiology centers, and other healthcare institutions.

"The goal of the HIE is near instant delivery of health information to the right place at the right time to provide safe, efficient, patient-centered care," said John M Colmers, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. "The sooner we expand this system statewide, the sooner we will begin to bend the cost curve of health care in the favor of Maryland families."

Organizations now participating in the HIE include:

- Holy Cross Hospital
- Suburban Hospital
- Montgomery General Hospital
- Quest Diagnostics
- Laboratory Corporation of America (LabCorp)
- American Radiology Services
- Community Radiology and Advanced Radiology

Several more providers and services will connect in the next few weeks.

This summer, Governor Martin O'Malley, Lt. Governor Brown and Secretary Colmers convened a roundtable of industry leaders and experts, including medical system presidents, hospital CEOs, state officials and other stakeholders to discuss health care reform and innovation in Maryland. As a result, 100 percent of Maryland's hospitals committed to the development of a statewide HIE which will lead to more physician practices and clinics coming online before the end of the year. This will include many of the state's federally qualified health clinics which predominantly serve Medicaid, uninsured and other underserved patients.

"The high level of commitment from stakeholders to participate in the HIE is impressive. Health information technology will become even more important in an era of personalized medicine and accountable care," said David Sharp, Director of the Center for Health Information Technology at the Maryland Health Care Commission.

In July of 2009, Maryland designated the Chesapeake Regional Information System for our Patients (CRISP) as the State's HIE. In August 2009, the Health Services Cost Review Commission awarded CRISP $10 million through the rate setting system to serve as the initial funding of the HIE. CRISP is a non-profit consortium that includes of Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, MedStar Health, the University of Maryland Medical System and Erickson Retirement Communities among others.

CRISP is a private, non-profit organization whose mission is to provide safer, more timely, efficient, effective, equitable, patient-centered health care to all Marylanders through health information technology. CRISP serves as the regional extension center for Health IT for Maryland. The program's goal is to assist 1,000 Maryland priority primary care providers in becoming meaningful users of HIT by 2012. CRISP is supported through the state's unique all-payer rate setting system and with federal grant funding.

CRISP will be expanding the kinds of data the HIE is able to exchange as participation grows, from today's hospital discharge summaries, lab results and radiology results to medical documents that contain more complete medical information, sometimes referred to as continuity of care documents, or "CCDs."

Governor O'Malley tasked Lt. Governor Brown to lead the O'Malley-Brown administration's health care portfolio. Brown chairs the Maryland Health Quality and Cost Council and co-chairs the HCRCC with Secretary Colmers. During the 2010 legislative session, Brown championed efforts to pass the Maryland False Health Claims Act of 2010 which will help the state recover in FY11 over $46.5 million of Medicaid funds that were stolen from taxpayers. Brown also led efforts to create the Patient Centered Medical Home program that offers providers with incentives to spend more time with patients and focus more closely on preventative care. In 2008, Lt. Governor Brown – a Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves and the nation's highest-ranking elected official to serve a tour of duty in Iraq – partnered with members from both parties in the General Assembly to pass the Veterans Behavioral Health Act which improved and expanded mental and behavioral health services for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

###

Michael Raia

Press Secretary

Office of Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown

Annapolis, MD 21401

410-260-3888 (o)

443-336-3032 (c)

mraia@gov.state.md.us